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The Village of Cambérène (Dakar)

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175 The village of Cambérène was founded about 1885 by the gathering of tabilés [disciples] around their teacher, Li Mamou Laye Thiaw, who had set up his dwelling near the watercourse Der Gui N'Dargou to the northeast of Yoff (east of the present gardens of the Government).

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622 Li Mamou died in 1909, and his brother, Seydina Issa Laye Thiaw, succeeded him at the head of the small zaouïa, which in 1914 was the victim of an epidemic of the plague.

Seydina Issa decided, as is generally done in such cases, to change the location of the little village.

361 Considering his first location unfavorable, being too near the Niaye, he decided to establish it in the open air in front of the heights of the string of littoral dunes on the very edge of the sea, which should, he thought, be healthier.

[369] Having ascertained that in Dakar an effort was made to align the houses and to put straight and wide streets between them, he resolved to order that, in establishing the new village, the center of the site was to be the mosque, which, first constructed [346] of wood and straw, was replaced in 1939 by a handsome edifice of masonry.

To the north and south of the mosque, Seydina Issa laid out two parallel avenues east to west. He placed the dwellings of his family facing the entrance of the mosque, leaving open a large space which he had reserved to the east; at right angles to the principal streets, some north-south streets were laid out, and each family put its dwellings in the form of a U opening on the principal streets.

[18] [Fig. 1. appears here.]

The arrangement was subsequently respected, and the most recent of the 28 land-grants open on a third east-west avenue.

The curious fact of this very precise outline is not noted when one arrives at Cambérène by the road, nor when one goes about on foot within the village, and even the diagram on the map on a scale of 1/50,000 does not make it stand out. Thus, it was a

/128 cont./

654 474 In order to enjoy these advantages the society member pays an assessment of one franc per year.

244 He can also request and obtain loans of food, rice, or millet, if he is justified by a case of great necessity: scarcity [731] as a result of an unfortunate or calamitous event.

[426] Finally, since last year, he has been able to obtain loans in money on the condition of certain guarantees. These loans are granted for cultivation, and also for the improvement of his agricultural equipment, or for starting or enlarging his herd. These loans may amount to as much as 5,000 francs and are to be paid back within several years.

654 474 In 1927, the members numbered 240,000.

The society has 30 storehouses, more than half of which are built out of permanent materials: laterite stones or cement.

[251] [343] [312] /129/ It has utilized its resources to make wells out of reinforced concrete in order to procure for the inhabitants the potable water necessary for their needs and for the needs of their animals.

It gives bonuses to the cultivators who exhibit the best harvests. It also awards bonuses for the capture of animals harmful to agriculture.

The work accomplished is remarkable.

[244] The increase in the production of groundnuts in the circle is due to the Société de Prévoyance, under the control of the administration.

In it, commerce has a valuable organization whose usefulness it recognizes and whose incontestable and uncontested services it moreover appreciates.

312 The water problem. Wells. The serious question of water presents itself in the circle as it does everywhere in Senegal. The economic life of the region depends on the water supply of its inhabitants.

In order to prevent the danger of a water shortage, it has been necessary to dig wells. The séanes, natural reservoirs or pockets dug by man, were too small in number. They received rain water, but their volume was limited, and a few weeks sufficed to empty them after the last rainfall.